



Summer
2015



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GPSC News

Volume 13 Issue 4

Wise Testifies Before Congress on Pipeline Safety Law

**Wise testifies before House Energy and Power Subcommittee*

**Proposes amendments to 2011 Pipeline Safety Act*

**Notes Georgia Pipeline Safety Program*

**Calls for Reducing Administrative Burdens*

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Commissioner Stan Wise testified before Congress on July 14 on the progress that the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, (PHMSA) is making in implementing a 2011 law on pipeline safety standards. Wise appeared before the U.S. House Subcommittee on Energy and Power. Commissioner Wise appeared on behalf of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) and the Commission. In his testimony, Wise outlined several proposed amendments to the Act to streamline pipeline safety enforcement by state regulators and reduce administrative and bureau-



Commissioner Stan Wise sits next to other witnesses appearing before the House Subcommittee on Energy and Power on July 14

cratic burdens on the states. Wise also noted Georgia's successful pipeline safety program which is one of the largest in the nation, based on based on services, miles of mains, inspectors, and budget. Wise pointed out that delay in receiving reim-

bursement from PHMSA for enforcing pipeline safety regulations creates severe financial strain on the Commission.

"The one issue that continues to cause problems for us is the increasing delays in re-

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Commission Approves Construction of Solar Facility at Marine Corps Base in Albany

The Commission on July 21 unanimously approved the construction of a new 46 megawatt (MW) solar facility at the Marine Corps Logistics Base in Albany, Georgia. The Commission approval follows a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the U.S. Navy and Georgia Power Company with the aim of furthering the Marine Corps' renewable en-



ergy, climate action and energy security goals. This is the fifth solar facility that will be con-

structed at Georgia military bases as a result of the partnership between the Commission, Georgia Power and the U.S. Department of Defense. The Commission previously approved contracts for solar facilities at Fort Gordon, Fort Stewart, Fort Benning and the Kings' Bay Naval Sub-

Wise Testifies Before Congress

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ceiving base grant reimbursements. Like other states, over the past few years, the amount of time Georgia, as well as other states', has had to wait to get paid for enforcing federal pipeline safety rules has increased steadily. In years' past, our finance department could depend on timely payments, which is very important on tight state budgets. This is an issue that needs resolution," Wise notes. Wise proposed the following legislative amendments in his testimony:

If you have a story for the next GPSC News, please send to Bill Edge, bille@psc.state.ga.us. Next issue deadline is June 15, 2015.

1. Increased Civil Penalties - 19 States have adopted the new mandated Civil Penalty level, but some States believe that it is more productive to penalize earnings or rates of return rather than simply levying fines when a violation occurs.
2. State Damage Prevention - Current law makes States with exemptions to Damage Prevention laws ineligible for State One-Call and State Damage Prevention Grants. NARUC opposed this provision in 2011. This provision has created problems for States as they cannot access grants for damage prevention. This is counterproductive to the goal of preventing damage.
3. Automatic and Remote Con-

trolled Shut-off valves - PHMSA has not published the required study to date. This study will help us determine whether or not additional State requirements may be in order. States will need to provide a rate structure to our regulated utilities that would provide for the recovery of any additional costs incurred by our utilities that may be required for the installation and maintenance of these facilities.

4. Integrity Management - PHMSA has not published the evaluation of the current Integrity Management Regulations and whether or not these requirements should be expanded beyond High Consequence areas.

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Marine Corps Solar Facility

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marine Base. Georgia Power will construct all of these projects and as with the other self-build projects, the Marine Corps project will be completed by the end of 2016 and have a 35 year life. "With the closing of Plant Mitchell, this project gives us the opportunity to provide jobs and economic development with a clean renewable energy source while at the same time contrib-

ute to national energy security," said **Commissioner Doug Everett** of Albany. "We hope these projects at our Georgia military bases will also offset any future plans for base closures," added Everett.

"This project is a credit to the Commission and our work with our partners, Georgia Power and the military. It will give us the opportunity to make a great investment for the people of Georgia," said **Commissioner Lauren "Bubba" McDonald**. "One

thing that is important to note, is that this project is part of the Defense Department's cybersecurity program to protect our military bases should their outside power sources be interrupted."

The Marine Corps project stems from the Commission's 2014 decision to reallocate 46 MW of capacity from the Plant Mitchell biomass project to other military self-build projects. The Company requested approval from the Commission to use the

remaining capacity for this purpose. The Commission approved the three U.S. Army projects in October 2014 and the U.S. Navy project in May 2015. The Commission authorized the Company to build these four 30 MW renewable projects provided that the cost of the projects is equal to or less than the Company's avoided costs, meaning no upward pressure on rates.

"The Commission is proud to be

able to play a role in improving national security, increasing energy independence, and supporting our Georgia bases," added **Commission Chairman Chuck Eaton**.

"Georgia is an early enactor with the Department of Defense to make these important projects happen," said **Commissioner Stan Wise**. "The opportunity to build these projects has been accomplished through a collabo-

rative process between the Department of Defense, Georgia Power, and the Commission."

"Georgia has done solar differently than California, Arizona and other states," said **Commissioner Tim Echols**. "We're doing projects like these on military bases as well as large utility scale arrays in South Georgia--without a subsidy and without a renewable portfolio standard," Echols added.

Commission Hears Testimony During Plant Vogtle Construction Monitoring Hearings

The Commission had a busy June holding two hearings for the Plant Vogtle Construction Monitoring process under Docket Number 29849. During the first hearing on June 2, Georgia Power presented its direct testimony in support of its request for the Commission to verify and approve its expenditures on the massive nuclear construction project for the six months ending December 31, 2014. The Georgia Power witness panel were Alison Chiock, David L. McKinney and David J. Clem. Testifying on behalf of the Commission Public Interest Advocacy Staff were **Steve Roetger** and



Kevin Green, (left) Georgia Power attorney, presents the Georgia Power panel during the Company's direct testimony on June 2.



Steve Roetger, Public Interest Advocacy Staff (left) and Bill Jacobs, Construction Monitor, testify at June 23 hearing.

Bill Jacobs. The Commission is scheduled to issue its decision at the regular Administrative Session on Tuesday August 18, 2015. Under

Georgia law, the Commission must issue a decision in this docket by August 26, 2016 or the Company's filing automatically takes effect.

Office Moves



On June 1, the Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Group and the Internal Consultants Group relocated to new offices.

Second Floor – 244 Building.

Allison Morris – suite #221, room #220, same telephone number; Dennis Sewell – suite #221, room #222, same telephone number; Tom Newsome – suite #226, room #226, same telephone number; Steve Roetger –

suite #226, room #227, same telephone number

Kate Leigey – suite #226, room #229, same telephone number

First Floor – 254 Building

Jamie Barber - room #110, same telephone number.

Nick Cooper - room #112, phone: (404) 656-0995

John Kaduk - room #114, same telephone number

SEARUC 2015

Commissioners and staff from 11 southeastern states gathered in San Antonio, Texas from June 7-10, 2015 for the annual meeting of the Southeastern Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (SEARUC). The annual meeting included a keynote address by FERC Commissioner Tony Clark and numer-



ous panels. The sessions included topics such as "Innovative Methods of Financing Infrastructure", "Hot Topics in Telecom" and "Nuclear Waste: Is there an Alternative to Yucca Mountain?", led by our own **Commissioner Stan Wise.**

Summer NARUC Meeting in New York

The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) held its summer committee meetings in New York City July 12-15. The meetings give regulators and staff a forum to hear from industry and political leaders and to discuss the latest updates and information on issues relevant to utility regulators.

Speakers presented on timely and sometimes controversial issues facing regulators, such as Lifeline reform, the Clean Power Plan, pipeline safety



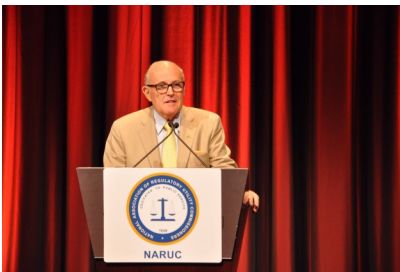
Commissioner McDonald listens while Commissioner Echols tweets during the Electric Committee session

and financing modern utility programs.

NARUC President Lisa Edgar opened the first general session on July 12 to a packed audience of state utility regulators and members of stakeholder



communities, highlighting some of the most relevant issues before the Association, including the Clean Power Plan and proposed amendments to pipeline safety regulations. Edgar also announced the creation of a telecommunications task force. Along with a panel on how to finance



Former NYC Mayor Rudolph Guiliani addresses NARUC

energy technologies of the future, keynote speakers included Richard Kauffman, chairman of



Southern Company Thomas Fanning makes a point during his discussion

energy and finance for New York, Office of Governor Andrew Cuomo; former New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani; and

Thomas Fanning, CEO of the Southern Company. Many sessions were held before standing-room-only audiences, such as the spirited debate between Commissioners Mignon Clyburn and Michael O'Rielly of the Federal Communications Commission, discussing the matter of reforming the Lifeline program. The NARUC Annual Meeting will be November 8-11, 2015 in Austin, Texas.

Wise Testifies

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Again, NARUC and its members are very interested in the findings of this study. This may also have an upward rate impact on our consumers, but could also lead to safer pipeline infrastructure in the States.

5. High Consequence Areas (HCA) Mapping - PHMSA has not updated the National Pipeline Mapping System to include the

identification of High Consequence Areas. They have updated access to the National Pipeline Mapping System by making it available for the general public, however due to security reasons the system does not provide a level of detail that much of the general public would find useful.

6. Leak Detection - PHMSA produced a report, has not as of yet published Notice of Proposed Rulemaking.

7. Maintenance of Effort - Language in 2011 Act has caused financial difficulties in the States and is not working when PHMSA must issue waivers for 36 or more States each year.

8. Gathering Lines - PHMSA published its study to Congress on May 8, 2015, and suggested gathering lines should be regulated in order to reduce risk to the public. NARUC agrees with this assessment.

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Echols Hosts 5th Annual Alternative Fuel Vehicles Roadshow

Commissioner Tim Echols hosted his 5th Annual Alternative Fuel Vehicle Roadshow this summer, visiting eight Georgia cities from June 15-26 to display alternative fuel vehicles and hear from fleet managers on their experiences in using alternative fuels in their fleets.

The tour began June 15 in Gainesville, then traveled to Cartersville and Albany before closing out the first week in College Park at the Georgia International Convention Center. The tour opened its second week on



Alternative Vehicles line up outside Valdosta State University

June 23 at Agnes Scott College in Decatur, and then went to St. Simon's Island and Valdosta before ending in Savannah at the Savannah Convention Center. The participants included Clean Cities Georgia, Georgia Power, Alliance Auto Gas, Hannah Solar, Efacec, Nissan, RaceTrac, Municipal Gas Authority of Gas, Atlanta Gas Light, Georgia Gas, Clean Energy Georgia, Milt Milton Honda, Con-



Commissioner Echols addresses the audience in Cartersville

gia Power, Alliance Auto Gas, Hannah Solar, Efacec, Nissan, RaceTrac, Municipal Gas Authority of Gas, Atlanta Gas Light, Georgia Gas, Clean Energy Georgia, Milt Milton Honda, Con-



Commissioner Lauren "Bubba" McDona-ald speaks to the Roadshow audience in Gainesville

stellation, Liberty Utilities, Langdale Fuel, Kia and the Propane Education and Research Council.

A number of local officials brought greetings and participated in the events. Among them were State Rep. Carl Rogers, Gainesville; State Representative Darel Ealum, Albany; State Senator William Ligon, Brunswick; and



State Senator William Ligon welcomes the Roadshow to St. Simon's Island

Mayor Dorothy Hubbard of Albany.

Wise Testifies

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9. Excess Flow Valves – Notice of Proposed Rulemaking released on July 7, 2015. NARUC is currently reviewing the proposal.

10. Maximum Allowable Operating Pressure (MAOP) – PHMSA has yet to implement regulations. NARUC encourages PHMSA to develop these rules

in a prudent and expeditious manner to ensure the public safety of these lines.

11. Accident and Incident Notification - PHMSA currently has posted on its website a proposed Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NOPR) requiring one hour notice of the confirmed discovery of accident or incident rather than two hours.

NARUC supports the shorter notifi-

cation period.

Commissioner Wise's complete written testimony is posted on the subcommittee web site.

<http://energycommerce.house.gov/press-release/energy-and-power-examine-pipeline-safety-next-week#sthash.K6pAYETO.dpuf>.

Commissioners Take Part in Solar Facilities Groundbreaking at Georgia Army Bases

Commissioners attended groundbreaking ceremonies on May 14 and May 15 for two new 30 megawatt (MW) solar photovoltaic installations for the U.S. Army on Georgia military bases. **Commissioner Stan Wise** attended the ceremony at Fort Gordon and **Commissioner Chuck Eaton** attended the groundbreaking at Fort Stewart tomorrow. The Fort Gordon and Fort Stewart projects are two of three Georgia Power solar projects for the Army that the Commission approved in October 2014. The Army held a groundbreaking for the third project, located at Fort Benning, on April



Commissioner Stan Wise at the groundbreaking ceremony at Fort Gordon, Augusta on May 14

17, 2015. "Georgia is an early enactor with



the Department of Defense to make these important projects happen," said Commissioner Wise. "The opportunity to build these projects came up rather quickly and was accomplished through a collaborative process between the Army, Georgia Power, and the Commission."

The three projects stem from a 2007 decision by the Commission which authorized the Company to build three 30 MW renewable projects provided that the cost of the projects is equal to or less than the Company's avoided costs, meaning no upward pressure on rates. The price of solar has dropped dramatically in recent years, allowing Georgia Power to now meet the avoided cost condition. These projects will contribute towards the Department of De-

fense mandates regarding renewable energy and energy security and represent a significant investment in Georgia Army bases.

"The Commission is proud to be able to play a role in improving national security, increasing energy independence, and supporting our Georgia bases," added Commissioner Eaton.



Commissioner Chuck Eaton takes part in Fort Stewart Groundbreaking Ceremony May 15



Wise Referees Contest for Cobb Charity

Commissioner Stan Wise served as the referee on June 11 as Gas South executives went head to head with executives from Atlanta Gas Light in a contest to pack the most lunches for Action Ministries' "Smart Lunch, Smart Kid Program". The time limit was two hours. Gas South won the contest with both groups packing more than 500 lunches. Action Ministries delivers the lunches to school children during the summer to



(left to right) Commissioner Wise, Action Ministries President and CEO John Moeller, Gas South CEO Kevin Greiner, and AGL President and CEO Bryan Batson.

ensure that they receive the nourishment they need. (from the Marietta Daily Journal) Action Ministries Inc. is a non-profit that provides an extensive network of community partners and volunteers with the tools and expertise to lead fellow Georgians out of poverty.

Employee News

Congratulations!

To: Crystal Barber, daughter of **Jamie Barber**, EERE Manager, on her marriage May 3, 2015 to Casey Childers at Rose Hall in Dallas, Georgia.



Farewell

To: **Chris Devine** to the EERE group as a summer intern. Chris is a recent University of Georgia graduate. He departed the Commission in mid-July to pursue his graduate degree.

Sympathy

To: **Kelli Cole** on the passing of her mother, Kathleen Laker on April 17, 2015.



Facilities Protection Director **Michele Therbert** took part in an award presentation May 13 by Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Deputy Administrator Timothy Watters to Marietta Fire Chief Jackie Gibbs honoring the Georgia Pipeline Emergency Response Initiative for setting national directions for pipeline safety.

Farewell

To: **O'tania Jenkins** who resigned April 30 to take a position with Georgia 811 as a Liaison Manager for Region 4. Said O'tania, "I have enjoyed my tenure here for the past 12 years and I appreciate having had the opportunity to work with you all. Thank you for the support, guidance, and encouragement you have provided me during my time here. I am looking forward to this new challenge and to starting a new phase of my career."



Commission staff and Commissioners gathered on July 1 for an Independence Day Salad Bar Celebration. All enjoyed salads of all types as well as beverages and desserts. Then

Independence Day Salad Bar



Monique "Miss Liberty" Andrews led the group in games and entertainment

Monique Andrews, as "Miss Liberty" led all a game of charades while patriotic music played in the background.

South Georgia Telecom Pioneer Passes Away

Mansfield Jennings, who headed ComSouth, passed away in Hawkinsville, Georgia on June 23. After World War Two, he returned to Hawkinsville to work for the Hawkinsville Telephone Company. He bought the company in 1980 and transformed it into a modern telecommunications company serving a broad swath of mid-



Mansfield Jennings

dle Georgia.

Commissioner Stan Wise paid tribute to Jennings during the Ju-

ly 7, 2015 Administrative Session saying, "Just to note the passing of the one of the industry greats in telecommunications, a great man in Georgia. He was just an all around great man, leader in his industry, leader in his community," said Wise.

Jennings served on the State Board of Regents for ten years as well as on numerous boards and civic groups in middle Georgia.

Georgia State Holidays for 2015

Commission Calendar



New Year's Day
M.L. King, Jr. Day
Confederate Memorial Day
Memorial Day
Independence Day
Labor Day
Columbus Day
Veterans Day
Thanksgiving Day
Robert E. Lee's Birthday
Washington's Birthday
Christmas Day

January 1
January 19
April 27
May 25
July 3
September 7
October 12
November 11
November 26
November 27
December 24
December 25

August 2015

4-Administrative Session
 13-Committees
 18-Administrative Session
 27-Committees

September 2015

1-Administrative Session
 7-Holiday
 8-Committees
 15-Administrative Session

October 2015

1-Committees
 6-Administrative Session

Commission Calendar

12-Holiday
 15-Committees
 20-Administrative Session
 29-Committees

November 2015

3-Administrative Session
 11-State Holiday
 12-Committee
 17-Administrative Session
 24-Committees
 26-Holiday
 27-Holiday

NARUC

Summer Meeting 2015

July 12-15, 2015
 New York City, N.Y.

Annual Meeting 2015

November 8-11, 2015
 Austin, Texas

Winter Meeting 2016

February 2-5, 2016
 Washington, D.C.

SEARUC

Annual Meeting 2016

June 12-16, 2016
 Manalapan, Florida



GPSC ONLINE: psc.state.ga.us

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